



February 22, 2023

The Honorable Melony Ghee Griffith
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
11 Bladen Street
James Senate Office Building, Room 220
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Support for Senate Bill 75

Dear Chair Griffith,

On behalf of the nearly 150 physician members of the Maryland Dermatologic Society, we are writing to share our support for Senate Bill 75. This legislation would be a critical step to ensure patients whose hair loss results from alopecia areata have access to prescription medicines and hair prostheses (wigs).

This is a disease that develops when the body attacks its own hair follicles, which can cause hair loss anywhere on the body. Most people develop it during childhood or their teenage years. Children who suffer from alopecia areata have significant psychological distress with anxiety and depression being commonly diagnosed.

Because hair loss caused by alopecia areata can greatly affect a person's quality of life and treatment is beyond the financial reach of most people, requiring the Maryland Medical Assistance Program, certain insurers, nonprofit health service plans, and health maintenance organizations to provide coverage for hair prostheses, prescription drugs and approved medical devices is necessary for the treatment of alopecia areata. Insurance coverage of alopecia areata would give hope to patients, especially those living with widespread hair loss.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide written comments on this important public health issue and urge your support for Senate Bill 75. As physicians, our number one priority is the health and welfare of our patients. The enactment of this

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legislation will improve access to treatments and hair prostheses that are in the best interest of the patient.

For further information, please contact Russel Kujan, executive director, Maryland Dermatologic Society at 410-539-0872.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CMW', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chikoti Mibenge Wheat, MD, FAAD
President
Maryland Dermatologic Society